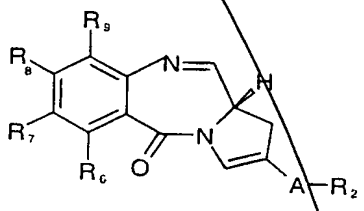
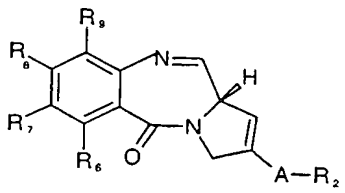
1. A compound of the formula **Ia** or **Ib**:



(Ia)



(Ib)

wherein:

A is CH_2, or a single bond;

R_2 is selected from: R, OH, OR, CO_2H, CO_2R, COH, COR, SO_2R, CN;

R_6, R_7 and R_9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, halo, amino, NHR, nitro, Me_3Sn;

where R is a lower alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of up to 12 carbon atoms, whereof the alkyl group optionally contains one or more carbon-carbon double or triple bonds, which may form part of a conjugated system, or an aryl group of up to 12 carbon atoms; and is optionally substituted by one or more halo, hydroxy, amino, or nitro groups, and optionally containing one or more hetero atoms which may form part of, or be, a functional group;

and R_8 is selected from H, R, OH, OR, halo, amino, NHR, nitro, Me_3Sn, where R is as defined above, or the compound is a dimer with each monomer being the same or different and being of formula **Ia** or **Ib**, where the R_8 groups of the monomers form together a bridge having the formula -X-R'-X- linking the monomers, where R' is an alkylene chain containing from 3 to 12 carbon atoms, which chain may be interrupted by one or more hetero-atoms and/or aromatic rings and

may contain one or more carbon-carbon double or triple bonds, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or N; or R_7 and R_8 together form a group $-O-(CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is 1 or 2;

except that in a compound of formula **Ia** when A is a single bond, then R_2 is not $CH=CH(CONH_2)$ or $CH=CH(CONMe_2)$.

2. A compound of formula **Ia** according to claim 1, with the proviso that when A is a single bond, then R_2 is not $CH=CR^AR^B$, where R^A and R^B are independently selected from H, R^c, COR^c, $CONH_2$, $CONHR^c$, $CONR^c_2$, cyano or phosphonate, where R^c is an unsubstituted alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms.

3. A compound according to either claim 1 or claim 2, wherein A is CH_2.

4. A compound according to claim 3, wherein R_2 is CO_2H, CO_2R, CH_2OH, or CH_2OR.

5. A compound according to claim 4, wherein R_2 is CO_2Me, $CO_2{}^tBu$, CH_2OH, or CH_2OAc.

6. A compound according to claim 1 or claim 3, wherein A is a single bond, and R_2 is an aryl group, or an alkyl or alkaryl group which contains at least one double bond which forms part of a conjugated system with the double bond of the C-ring.

7. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims wherein R_6, R_7 and R_9 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are independently selected from H and OR.

8. A compound according to claim 7, wherein R_6, R_7 and R_9 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are independently selected from H, OMe and OCH_2Ph.

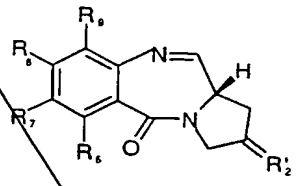
9. A compound according to claim 7, wherein R_7 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are OR, and R_6 and R_9 are H.

10. A compound according to claim 9, wherein R_7 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are independently either OMe or OCH_2Ph.

11. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims of formula **Ia**.

12. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims which is a dimer, wherein the dimer bridge is of the formula $-O-(CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is from 1 to 12.

13. A compound of formula **II**:



(II)

wherein:

R'_2 is selected from: O, $CHR"_2$, where $R"_2$ is selected from H, R, CO_2R, COR, CHO, CO_2H, halo;

R_6, R_7 and R_9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, halo, amino, NHR, nitro, Me_3Sn;

where R is a lower alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of up to 12 carbon atoms, whereof the alkyl group optionally contains one or more carbon-carbon double or triple bonds, which may form part of a conjugated system, or an aryl group of up to 12 carbon atoms; and is optionally substituted by one or more halo, hydroxy, amino, or nitro groups, and optionally containing one or more hetero atoms which may from part of, or be, a functional group;

and R_8 is selected from H, R, OH, OR, halo, amino, NHR, nitro, Me_3Sn, where R is as defined above or the compound is a dimer with each monomer being the same or different and being of formula **II**, where the R_8 groups of the monomers form together a bridge having the formula -X-R'-X- linking the monomers, where R' is an alkylene chain containing from 3 to 12 carbon atoms, which chain may be interrupted by one or more hetero-atoms and/or aromatic rings and may contain one or more carbon-carbon double or triple bonds, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or N; or R_7 and R_8 together form a group $-O-)CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is 1 or 2;

except that:

(i) when R'_2 is CH-Et, and R_6, R_8 and R_9 are H, R_7 is not sibirosamine pyranoside; and

(ii) when R'_2 is CH-Me, and R_6 and R_9 are H, R_7 and R_8 are not both H or both OMe, or OMe and OH respectively.

14. A compound according to claim 13, wherein R'_2 is O, CH_2 or $CHCH_3$.

15. A compound according to either claim 13 or claim 14, wherein R_6, R_7 and R_9 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are independently selected from H, OR or a halogen atom.

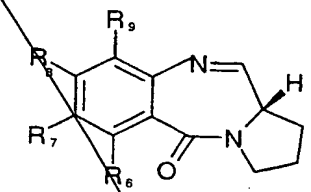
16. A compound according to claim 15, wherein R_6, R_7 and R_9 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are independently selected from H, OMe and OCH_2Ph, and I.

17. A compound according to claim 15, wherein R_7 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are independently OR or a halogen atom and R_6 and R_9 are H.

18. A compound according to claim 17, wherein R_7 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 are independently selected from OMe, OCH_2Ph or I.

19. A compound according to any one of claims 13 to 18 which is a dimer, wherein the dimer bridge is of the formula $-O-(CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is from 1 to 12.

20. A compound of the formula **III**:



(III)

wherein:

R_6, R_7 and R_9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, halo, amino, NHR, nitro, Me_3Sn;

where R is a lower alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of up to 12 carbon atoms, whereof the alkyl group optionally contains one or more carbon-carbon double or triple bonds, which may form part of a conjugated system, or an aryl group of up to 12 carbon atoms; and is optionally substituted by one or more halo, hydroxy, amino, or nitro groups, and optionally containing one or more hetero atoms which may from part of, or be, a functional group;

Sub B16

and R_8 is selected from H, R, OH, OR, halo, amino, NHR, nitro, Me_3Sn, where R is as defined above or the compound is a dimer with each monomer being the same or different and being of formula **III**, where the R_8 groups of the monomers form together a bridge having the formula -X-R'-X- linking the monomers, where R' is an alkylene chain containing from 3 to 12 carbon atoms, which chain may be interrupted by one or more hetero-atoms and/or aromatic rings and may contain one or more carbon-carbon double or triple bonds, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or N; or R_7 and R_8 together form a group $-O-(CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is 1 or 2;

wherein at least one of R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9 are not H;

except that:

(i) when R_6 and R_9 are H, R_7 and R_8 are not both OMe, OMe and OBn respectively, or OMe and OH respectively;

(ii) when R_6 and R_7 are H, R_8 and R_9 are not Me and OH respectively;

(iii) when three of R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9 are H, the other is not Me;

(iv) when R_6, R_7, and R_8 are H, R_9 is not OMe;

(v) when R_6, R_8 and R_9 are H, R_7 is not OMe; and

(vi) when R_6, and R_9 are H and R_7 is OMe, the compound is not a dimer.

21. A compound according to claim 20, wherein only one of R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9 is H.

22. A compound according to claim 21, wherein those of R_6, R_7, R_9 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 which are not H are OR.

23. A compound according to claim 22, wherein those of R_6, R_7, R_9 and, unless the compound is a dimer, R_8 which are not H are selected from OMe, and OBn.

24. A compound according to either claim 20 or claim 21, wherein at least one of R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9 is a dimer, is NH_2.

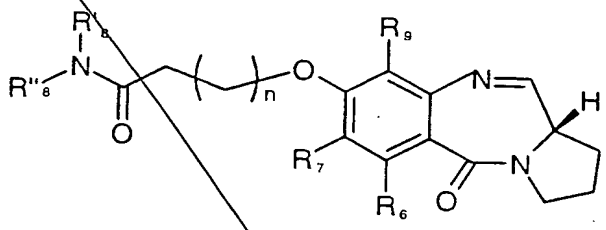
25. A compound according to claim 20, claim 21 or claim 24, wherein at least one of R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9 is an aryl group, preferably of up to 12 carbon atoms, which is optionally substituted by one or more halo, hydroxy, amino, or nitro groups, and optionally contains one or more hetero atoms which may from part of, or be, a functional group.

26. A compound according to claim 25, wherein at least one of R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9, is a phenyl group, optionally substituted by one or more methoxy, ethoxy or nitro groups.

27. A compound according to claim 26, wherein at least one of R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9, is selected from: Ph, p-MeO-Ph, m-NO_2-Ph and p-NO_2-Ph.

28. A compound according to any one of claims 20 to 27 where the compound is a dimer, wherein the dimer bridge is of the formula -O-$(CH_2)_p$-O-, where p is from 1 to 12.

29. A compound of formula **IV**:



(IV)

wherein:

R_6, R_7 and R_9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, halo, amino, NHR, nitro, Me_3Sn;

where R is a lower alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of up to 12 carbon atoms, whereof the alkyl group optionally contains one or more carbon-carbon double or triple bonds, which may form part of a conjugated system, or an aryl group of up to 12 carbon atoms; and is optionally substituted by one or more halo, hydroxy, amino, or nitro groups, and optionally containing one or more hetero atoms which may form part of, or be, a functional group;

R_8' and R_8'' are either independently selected from H, R or together form a cyclic amine; and

n is from 1 to 7.

30. A compound according to claim 29, wherein one of R'_8 and R''_8 is a nitrogen protecting group.

Sub B19

31. A compound according to either claim 29 or 30, wherein R_7 is an electron withdrawing group.

Sub B20

32. A compound according to any one of claims 29 to 31, wherein R_6 and R_9 are selected from H and OR.

Sub B21

33. A compound according to claim 32, wherein R_6 and R_9 are selected from OMe, OEt and OBn.

Sub B21'

34. A compound according to any one of claims 30 to 33, wherein n is 1 to 3.

Sub B22

35. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims wherein R is selected from a lower alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of up to 12 carbon atoms, or an aryl group of up to 12 carbon atoms, optionally substituted by one or more halo, hydroxy, amino, or nitro groups.

36. A compound according to claim 35, wherein R is selected from a lower alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms optionally substituted by one or more halo, hydroxy, amino, or nitro groups.

37. A compound according to claim 36, wherein R is an unsubstituted straight or branched chain alkyl having 1 to 10 carbon atoms.

Sub B23

38. The use of a compound according to any one of the preceding claims in a method of therapy.

39. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 37 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

40. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 37 to prepare a medicament for the treatment of a gene-based disease.

41. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 37 to prepare a medicament for the treatment of a viral, parasitic or bacterial infection.

42. A process for preparing a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 37.

43. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 37 for the preparation of a medicament for the treatment of cisplatin-refactory disease.

44. A method of inhibiting the growth of cisplatin-refactory cells which method comprises treating said cells with a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 37.

45. A method according to claim 44 wherein said compound is SJG-136 1,1'-[[(Propane-1,3-diyl)dioxy]bis[(11a*S*)-7-methoxy-2-methylidene-1,2,3,11a-tetrahydro-5*H*-pyrrolo[2,1-*c*][1,4]benzodiazepin-5-one].